



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/708,653	03/17/2004	John Larry Sanders	30621-DIV1-CIP1	2652
23589	7590	05/18/2006		
HOVEY WILLIAMS LLP 2405 GRAND BLVD., SUITE 400 KANSAS CITY, MO 64108			EXAMINER PEZZUTO, HELEN LEE	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1713	
DATE MAILED: 05/18/2006				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/708,653

Applicant(s)

SANDERS ET AL.

Examiner

Helen L. Pezzuto

Art Unit

1713

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 February 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11, 23-34, 37 and 38 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11, 23-34, 37 and 38 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 2/17/06 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

Applicant's amendment to claims 1, 23, the cancellation of claims 12-22, 35-36, and the addition of claims 37-38 filed in conjunction with the RCE on 2/17/06 are acknowledged. Currently, claims 1-11, 23-34, and 37-38 are pending in this application. In light of applicant's amendment and remarks, previous 112, and 103 rejections are hereby withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at

Art Unit: 1713

the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-11, 23-34 and 37-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C.

103(a) as being unpatentable over Ura-neck et al (US0583) in view of Bonsignore et al. (US-238).

U.S. 3,070,583 to Ura-neck et al. discloses a method for solubilizing an acid copolymer and the subsequent utility the resulting aqueous copolymer salt solution as coating for fertilizers (col. 1, lines 33-42; col. 3, lines 14-28). Prior art solubilized acid copolymer is derived from acidic monomers containing at least one carboxy group per molecule, copolymerized with one or more comonomer. These acidic monomers include dibasic acid such as maleic, itaconic, fumaric within the scope of the instant dicarboxylic acid moieties (col. 2, lines 13-69; col. 3, lines 21-33). Prior art teaches that the resulting polymer must be water soluble (col. 3, lines 1-3, 60-65) and can be used as coating composition for fertilizers, thus, encompassing the instant substantially water-soluble dicarboxylic acid polymer being in contact with fertilizer particle limitation as claimed. Suitable solubilizing agent includes alkali metal hydroxide, which is expected to inherently complexes with the carboxylate polymer to form a

Art Unit: 1713

soluble salt solution (col. 1, lines 58-59). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to provide a coating of a substantially water-soluble dicarboxylic acid polymer onto fertilizers, motivated by the reasonable expectation of success. Once the selection of the at least two diacarboxylic acid monomers to produce the polymer, and the subsequent combination of the polymer and the fertilizer is suggested, the discovery of the optimum or workable ranges of polymer coating and average diameter of the fertilizer particles involves only routine skill in the art. Furthermore, the resultant property of reduced dust generation would be an inherent characteristic (or at least expected property) of the applied coating because of the identical dicarboxylic acid monomers chosen and utilized. Finally, US-583 is silent regarding the polymer and fertilizer being co-ground together as expressed in claims 2 and 24, the examiner is of the position that co-grounding of polymer with fertilizer is conventional practice to one skilled in the art, as shown in analogous US 5,563,238 to Bonsignore et al. Accordingly, it would have been obvious and within the purview of one having ordinary skill in the art to admixed the polymer with fertilizers and subsequently co-ground the

Art Unit: 1713

admixture together, motivated by the reasonable expectation of success in controlling the release rate of the fertilizer into the agricultural site as taught in the prior art. Thus, rendering obvious the present claims.

Double Patenting

4. Claims 1-11, 23-34, and 37-38 provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-25 of copending Application No. 10/708,714. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the instant fertilizer product comprising fertilizer particles in contact with polymer encompasses the composition comprising a fertilizer product and a diacboxylic acid polymer in the copending application..

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

5. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re*

Art Unit: 1713

Berg, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

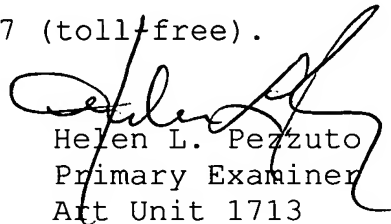
Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Helen L. Pezzuto whose telephone number is (571) 272-1108. The examiner can normally be reached on 8 AM to 4 PM, Monday thru Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Wu can be reached on (571) 272-1114. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 1713

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll free).



Helen L. Pezzuto
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1713

hlp